AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a ferritic stainless steel sheet having good workability with less anisotropy, which comprises the steps of:

~~providing a ferritic stainless steel comprising C up to about 0.03 mass %, N up to about 0.03 mass %, Si up to about 2.0 mass %, Mn up to about 2.0 mass %, Ni up to about 0.6 mass %, Cr about 9-35 mass %, Nb about 0.15-0.80 mass % and the balance being Fe except inevitable impurities;~~

providing a ferritic stainless steel consisting essentially of 0.03 mass % or less of C, 0.03 mass % or less of N, 2.0 mass % or less of Si, 2.0 mass % or less of Mn, 0.07-0.6 mass % of Ni, 9-35 mass % of Cr, 0.15-0.80 mass % of Nb and the balance being Fe except inevitable impurities;

~~precipitation-heating said stainless steel at a temperature in a range of 700-850°C for a time period not longer than 25 hours; and~~

precipitation-heating said stainless steel at a temperature (T) in a range of 700-850°C for a time period (t) not longer than 25 hours with the provision that a value λ, defined by a formula of $\lambda=(T + 273)\cdot(20 + \log t)/1000$, is controlled within a range of 19-23 so as to distribute Nb-containing precipitates of 2 μm or less in particle size at a ratio of 1.1 mass % or more; and

finish-annealing said stainless steel at a temperature in a range of 900-1100°C for a time period not longer than 1 minute.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The method of manufacturing according to claim 1, wherein the stainless steel further ~~comprises~~contains at least one of Ti up to about 0.5 mass %, Mo up to about 3.0 mass %, Cu up to about 2.0 mass % and Al up to about 6.0 mass %.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A method of manufacturing a ferritic stainless steel sheet having good workability with less ~~in-plane~~ anisotropy, which comprises the steps of:

~~providing a ferritic stainless steel comprising C up to about 0.03 mass %, N up to about 0.03 mass %, Si up to about 2.0 mass %, Mn up to about 2.0 mass %, Ni up to about 0.6 mass %, Cr about 9-35 mass %, Nb about 0.15-0.80 mass % and the balance being Fe except inevitable impurities;~~

providing a ferritic stainless steel consisting essentially of 0.03 mass % or less of C, 0.03 mass % or less of N, 2.0 mass % or less of Si, 2.0 mass % or less of Mn, 0.07-0.6 mass % of Ni, 9-35 mass % of Cr, 0.15-0.80 mass % of Nb and the balance being Fe except inevitable impurities;

~~precipitation-heating said stainless steel at a temperature in a range of 450-750°C for a time period not longer than 20 hours; and~~

precipitation-heating said stainless steel at a temperature (T) in a range of 450-750°C for a time period (t) not longer than 20 hours with the provision that a value λ defined by a formula of $\lambda=(T + 273)\cdot(20 + \log t)/1000$, is controlled within a range of 13-19 so as to distribute Nb-containing precipitates of 0.5 μm or less in particle size at a ratio of 0.4 mass % or more; and

finish-annealing said stainless steel at a temperature in a range of 900-1100°C for a time period not longer than 1 minute.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The method of manufacturing according to claim 3, wherein the stainless steel further ~~comprises~~contains at least one of Ti up to about 0.5 mass %, Mo up to about 3.0 mass %, Cu up to about 2.0 mass % and Al up to about 6.0 mass %.

Claim 5 (original): The method of manufacturing according to claim 3, wherein fine precipitates are distributed at a total ratio of 0.4-1.2 mass % in a steel matrix by the precipitation-heating.